

MARVEL[®]
COMICS



DAREDEVIL

FEB '97 361



DAREDEVIL[®]

THE
BLACK
WIDOW™


Matthew Ryan

--STRIKES
BACK!

STAN LEE PRESENTS:

THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR, A WOMAN OF MYSTERY, AND SOME...

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

THE BEST PART ABOUT
BEING A SUPER HERO.

THAT'S EASY--
THE THRILL OF
COMMUTING,

NO WAITING.
NO CROWDS.
NO GRIDLOCK.

NO NET.

NOTHING BUT FORTY STORIES OF
AIR BETWEEN ME AND THE PAVEMENT.

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CARL KESEL: WRITER
CARY NORD: PENCILER
MATT RYAN: INKER

UL HIGGINS: LETTERER
KEVIN TINSLEY: COLORIST
AMERICAN COLOR: SEPS
PROFESSOR FELDER: EDITOR
BOB HARRAS: CHIEF

A large panel showing Blade, a man in a red and black suit, falling upside down from a building. He is holding a briefcase. The background shows a cityscape with a yellow building.

OKAY, MAYBE IT
ISN'T FOR **EVERYONE**.

MAYBE EVEN I WOULDN'T DO
THIS IF I DIDN'T HAVE
HEIGHTENED SENSES.

I MEAN,
I'M NOT
CRAZY...

...JUST
BLIND!

An inset panel showing a man in a blue shirt sitting on a bench, reading a newspaper. A large white lightning bolt strikes the ground near him. The background is a red brick wall.

-- THANKS FOR SPENDING THE **NIGHT**
WITH ME. BECAUSE OF YOU, IT'S
NEVER LONELY IN THE WFSK
EBONY TOWER...

I REALLY SHOULDN'T
FEEL THIS **GOOD**--
I DIDN'T SLEEP
VERY WELL AT ALL.

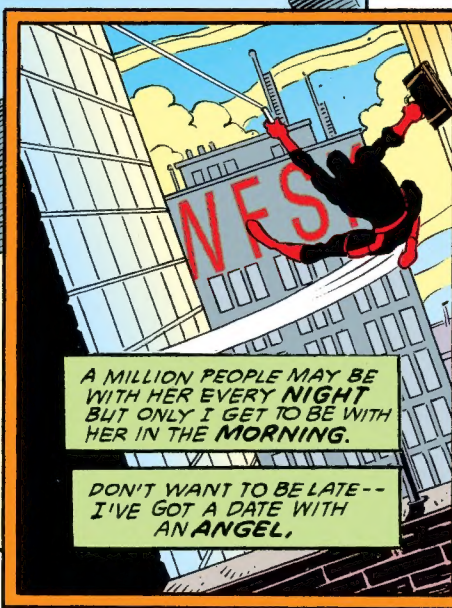
I GUESS THAT'S BECAUSE MORE
AND MORE PEOPLE ARE LISTENING
TO **KAREN'S RADIO SHOW.**

WHEN YOU CAN HEAR A
WHISPER FROM A BLOCK
AWAY, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE
NOT TO NOTICE KAREN'S
VOICE IN THE AIR
BETWEEN MIDNIGHT
AND DAWN.

FROM PASSING CABS...
THE JANITOR'S WALK-
MAN... A DOZEN
APARTMENTS IN OUR
BUILDING ALONE...

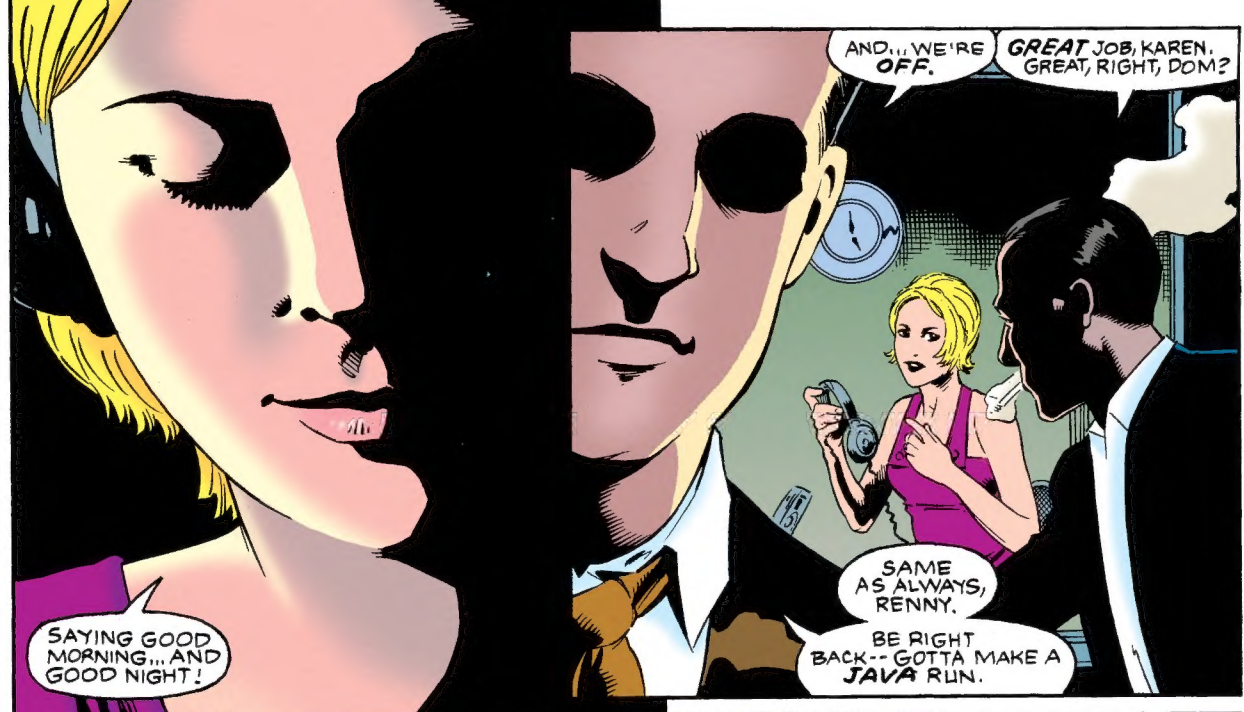
MAKES IT HARD
TO SLEEP.

IN A **GOOD**
WAY.

An inset panel showing Blade hanging from a ledge of a building. The building has a large red 'NFS' sign. The background shows a cityscape with a yellow building.

A MILLION PEOPLE MAY BE
WITH HER EVERY **NIGHT**
BUT ONLY I GET TO BE WITH
HER IN THE **MORNING.**

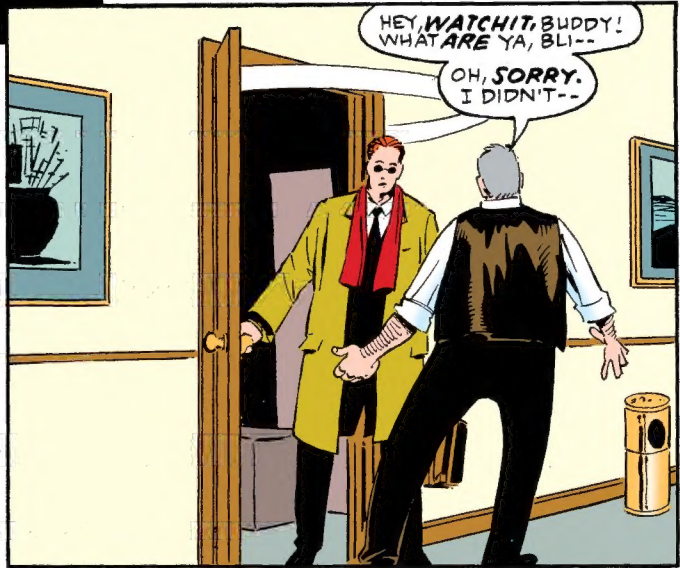
DON'T WANT TO BE LATE--
I'VE GOT A DATE WITH
AN **ANGEL.**



YEAH, SHE'S A **GOOD KID**... THAT KAREN, POURS HER HEART AN' SOUL INTO THE JOB...

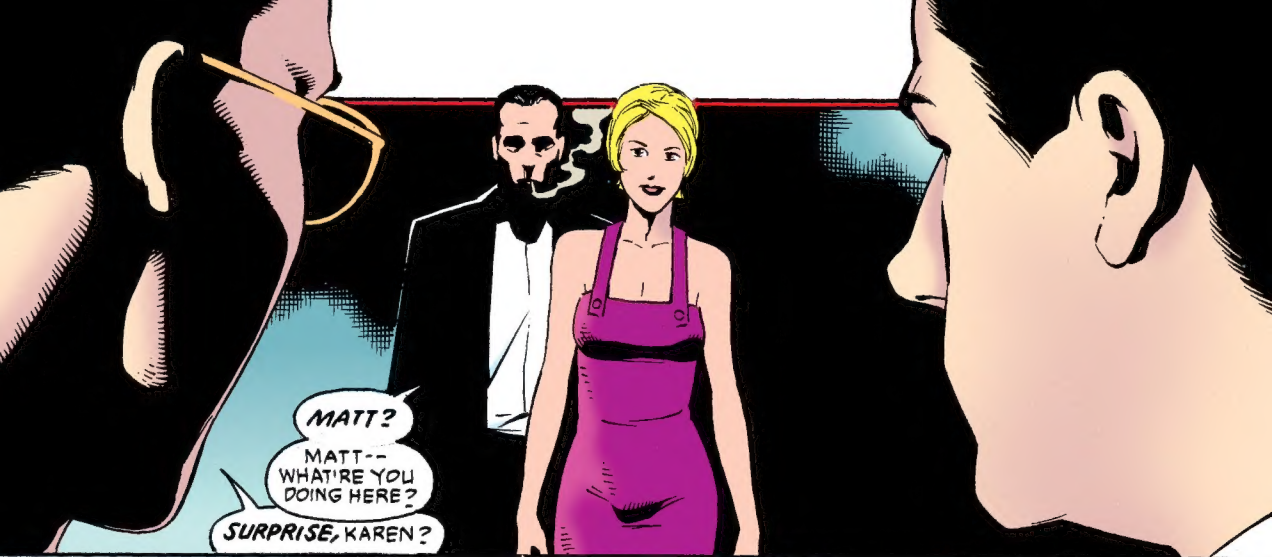
BOSS'S GOT BIG PLANS FOR HER, THAT'S FOR SURE.

HOPE SHE CAN **HANDLE** IT. HATE TO SEE ANYTHING **HAPPEN** TO--

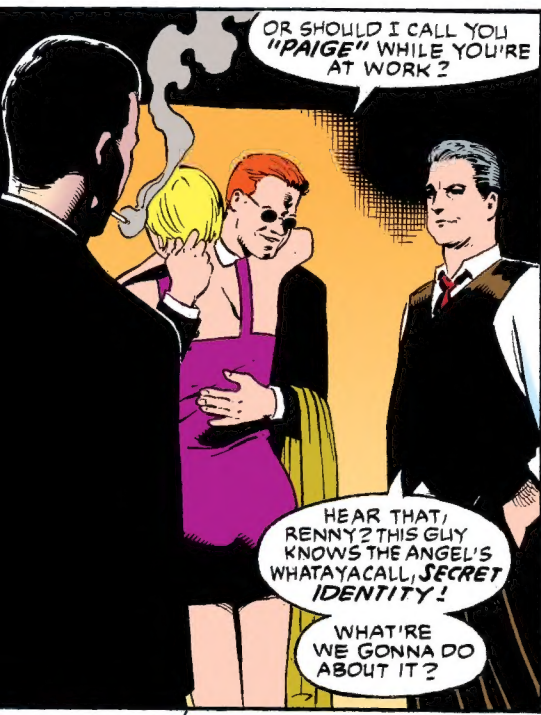


YOU DIDN'T MAKE A WRONG TURN AND END UP IN A **STORAGE ROOM** LIKE I DID!





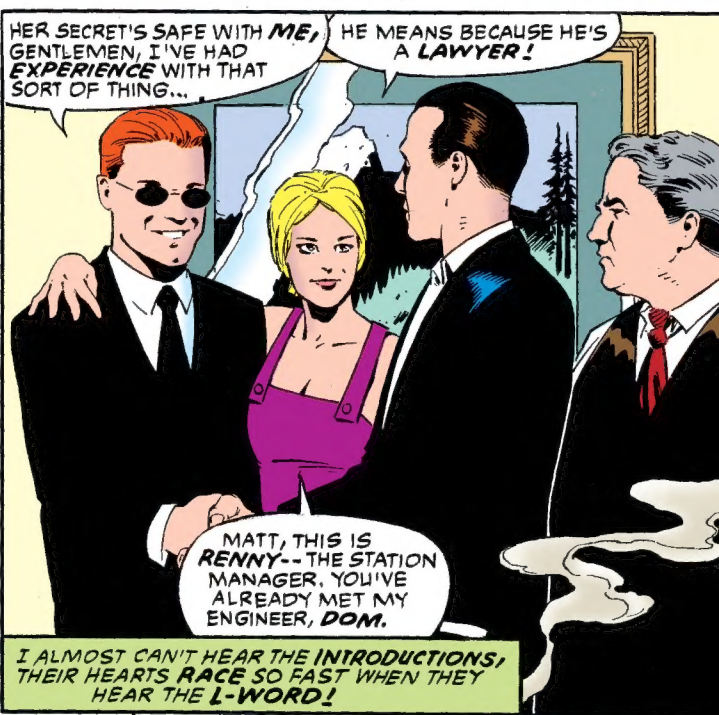
MATT?
MATT--
WHAT'RE YOU
DOING HERE?
SURPRISE, KAREN?



OR SHOULD I CALL YOU
"PAIGE" WHILE YOU'RE
AT WORK?

HEAR THAT,
RENNY? THIS GUY
KNOWS THE ANGEL'S
WHATAYACALL, **SECRET
IDENTITY!**

WHAT'RE
WE GONNA DO
ABOUT IT?

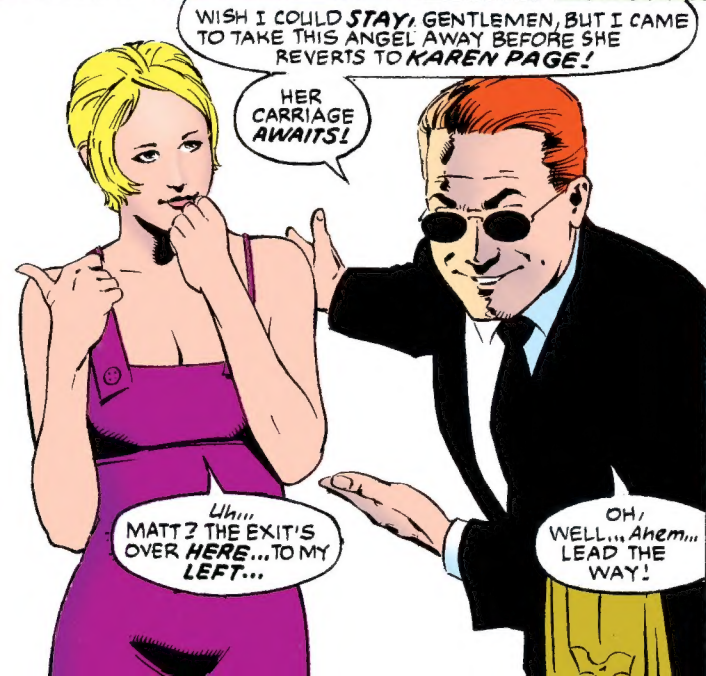


HER SECRET'S SAFE WITH **ME**, HE MEANS BECAUSE HE'S
GENTLEMEN, I'VE HAD **EXPERIENCE** WITH THAT
SORT OF THING...

HE MEANS BECAUSE HE'S
A **LAWYER!**

MATT, THIS IS
RENNY-- THE STATION
MANAGER. YOU'VE
ALREADY MET MY
ENGINEER, **DOM**.

I ALMOST CAN'T HEAR THE **INTRODUCTIONS**,
THEIR HEARTS **RACE** SO FAST WHEN THEY
HEAR THE **L-WORD!**



WISH I COULD **STAY**, GENTLEMEN, BUT I CAME
TO TAKE THIS ANGEL AWAY BEFORE SHE
REVERTS TO **KAREN PAGE!**

HER
CARRIAGE
AWAITS!

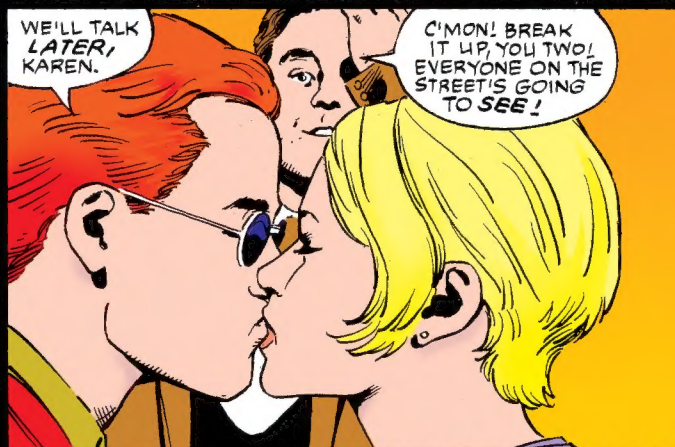
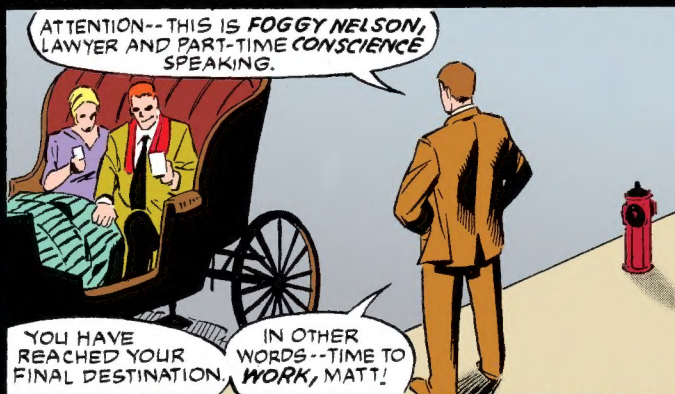
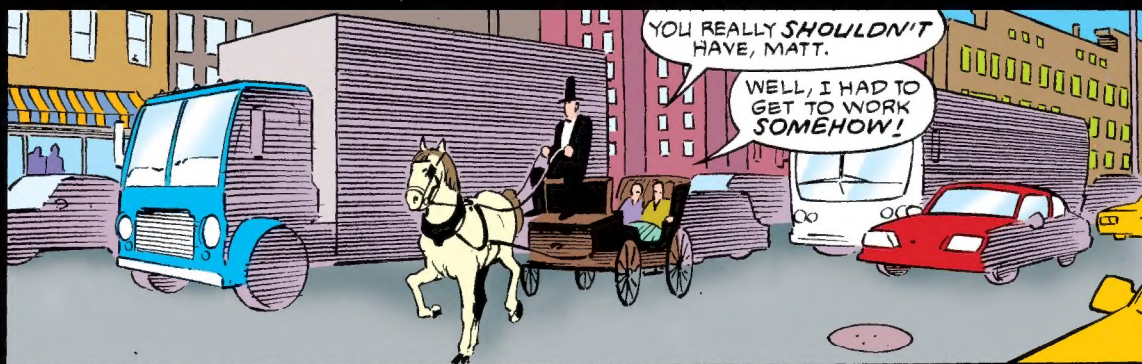
Uh...
MATT? THE EXIT'S
OVER **HERE**... TO MY
LEFT...

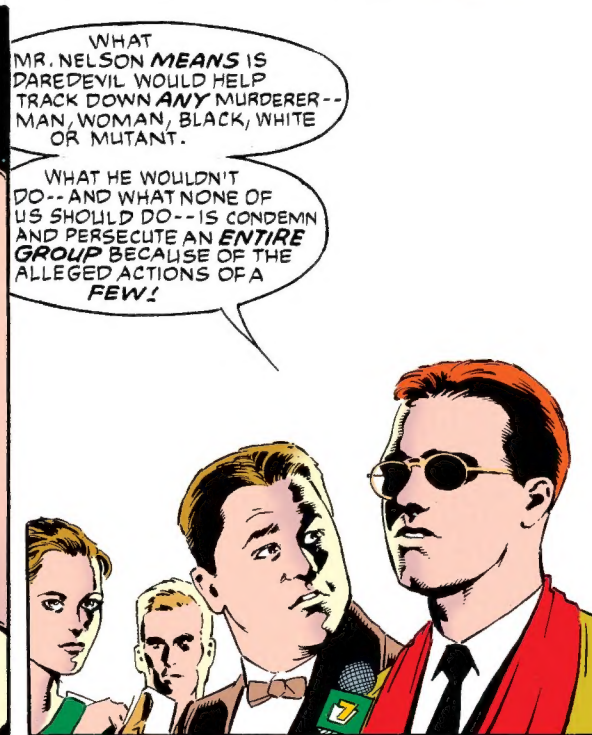
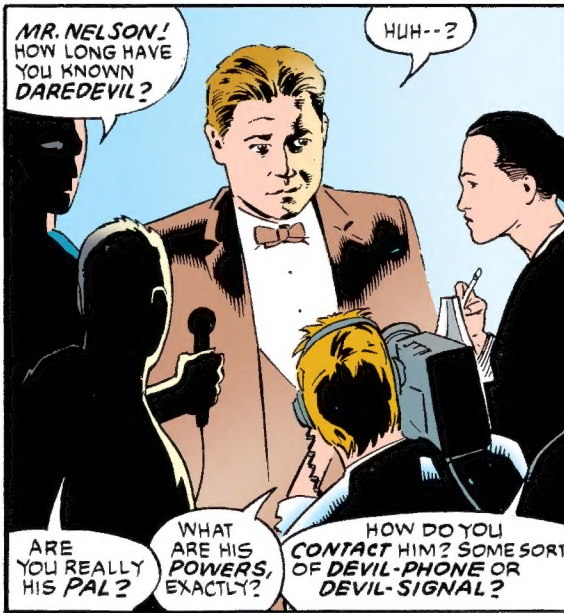
OH,
WELL... Ahem...
LEAD THE
WAY!

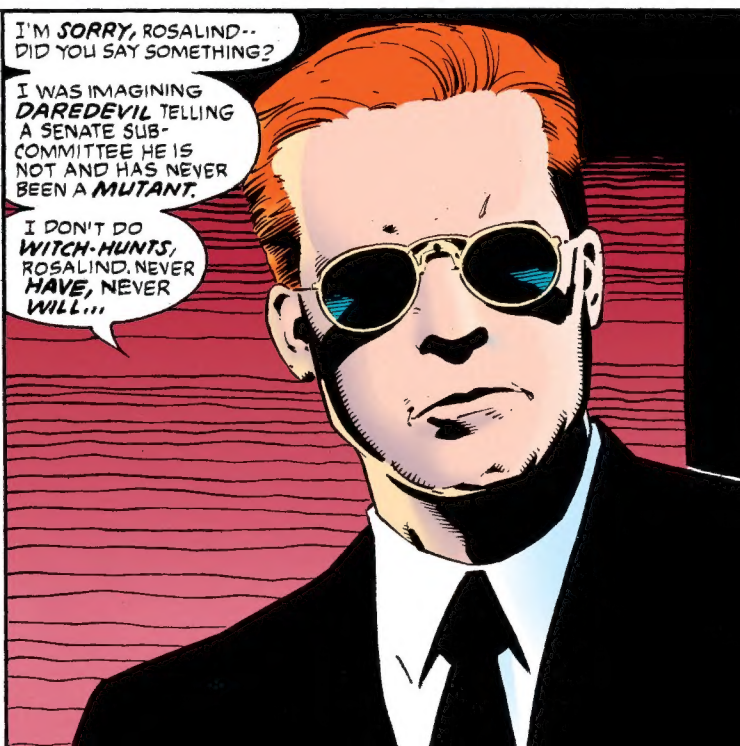
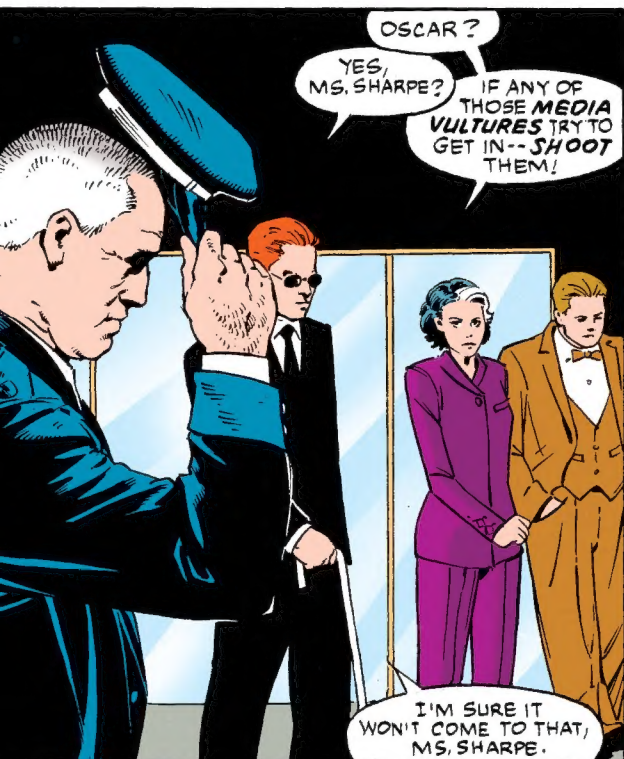
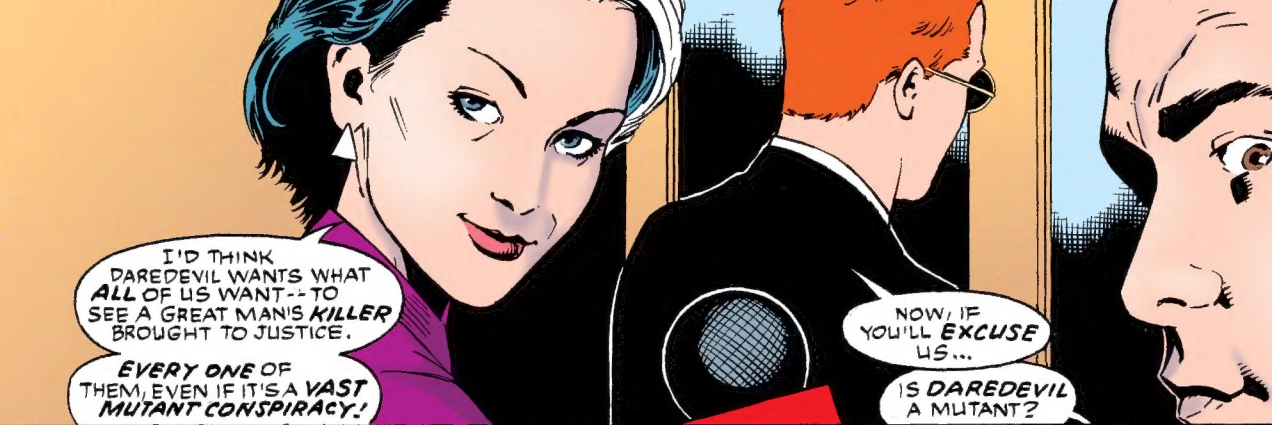


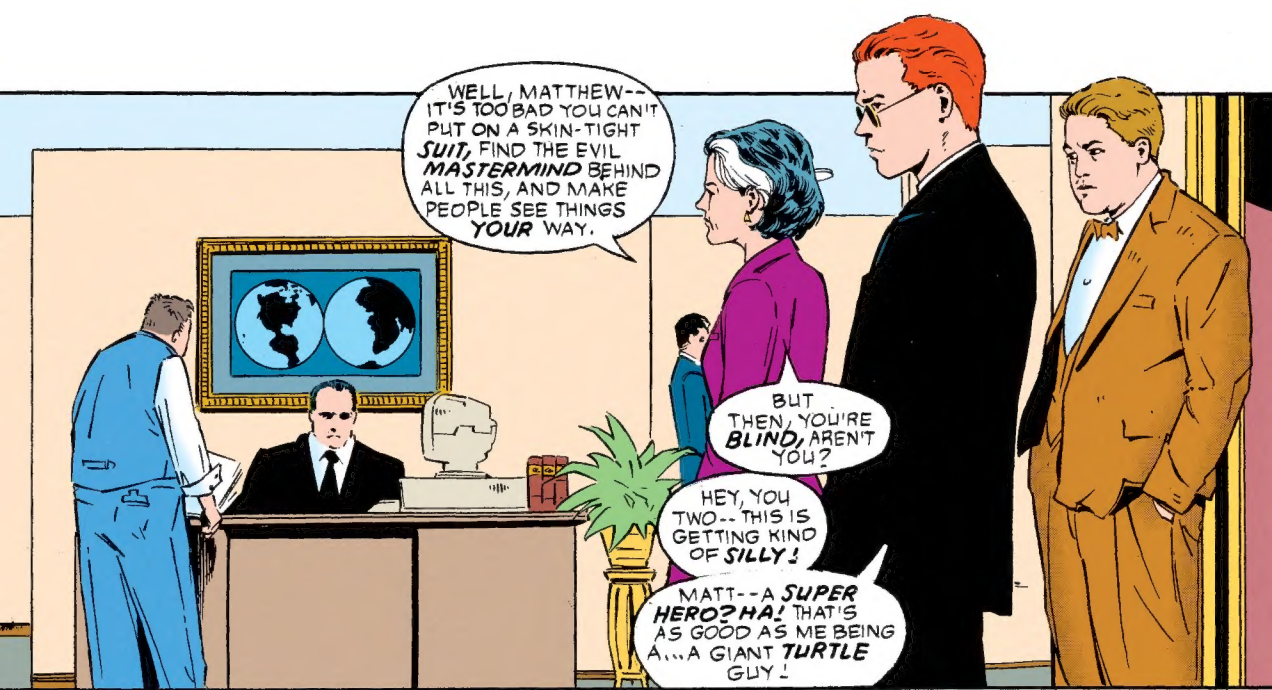
A **LAWYER**...

THE BOSS
AIN'T GONNA
LIKE IT, RENNY.
AIN'T GONNA
LIKE IT AT
ALL...







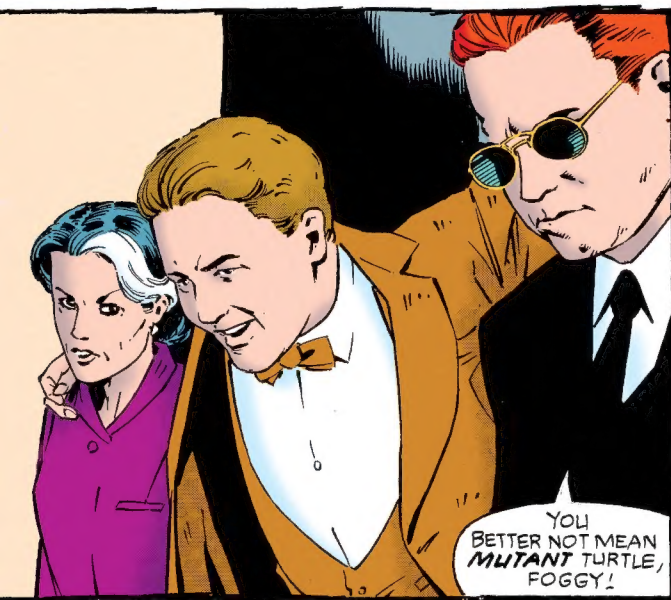


WELL, MATTHEW--
IT'S TOO BAD YOU CAN'T
PUT ON A SKIN-TIGHT
SUIT, FIND THE EVIL
MASTERMIND BEHIND
ALL THIS, AND MAKE
PEOPLE SEE THINGS
YOUR WAY.

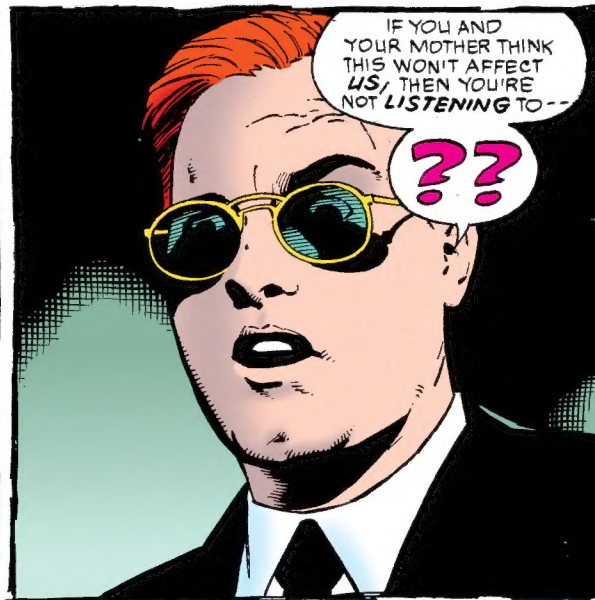
BUT
THEN, YOU'RE
BLIND, AREN'T
YOU?

HEY, YOU
TWO-- THIS IS
GETTING KIND
OF **SILLY**!

MATT--A **SUPER
HERO**? HA! THAT'S
AS GOOD AS ME BEING
A...A **GIANT TURTLE
GUY**!

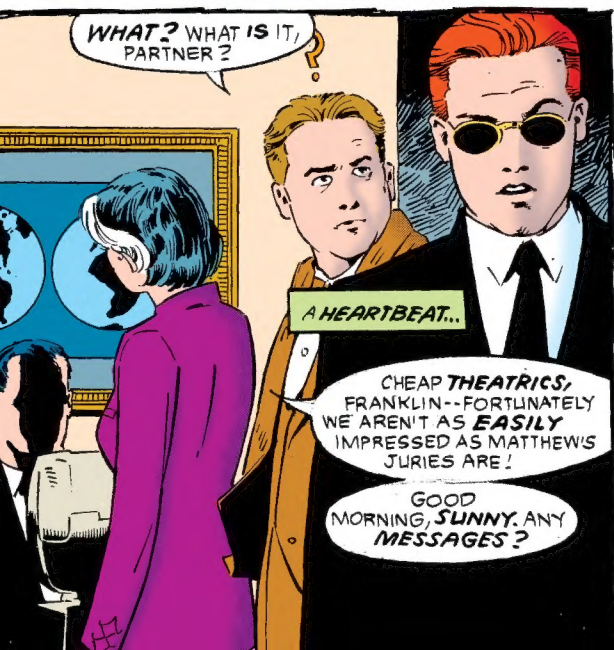


YOU
BETTER NOT MEAN
MUTANT TURTLE,
FOGGY!



IF YOU AND
YOUR MOTHER THINK
THIS WON'T AFFECT
US, THEN YOU'RE
NOT **LISTENING** TO--

??

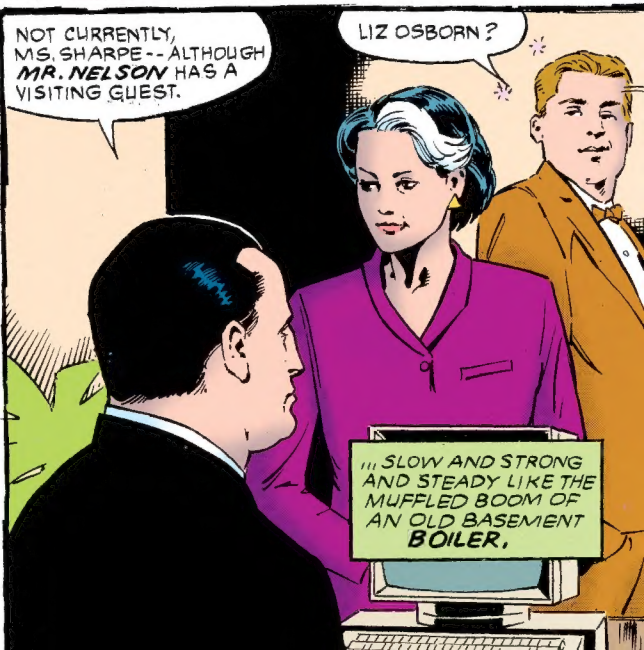


WHAT? WHAT IS IT,
PARTNER?

A **HEARTBEAT**...

CHEAP **THEATRICS**,
FRANKLIN--FORTUNATELY
WE AREN'T AS **EASILY**
IMPRESSED AS MATTHEW'S
JURIES ARE!

GOOD
MORNING, **SUNNY**. ANY
MESSAGES?



NOT CURRENTLY,
MS. SHARPE--ALTHOUGH
MR. NELSON HAS A
VISITING GUEST.

LIZ OSBORN?

"SLOW AND STRONG
AND STEADY LIKE THE
MUFFLED BOOM OF
AN OLD BASEMENT
BOILER."

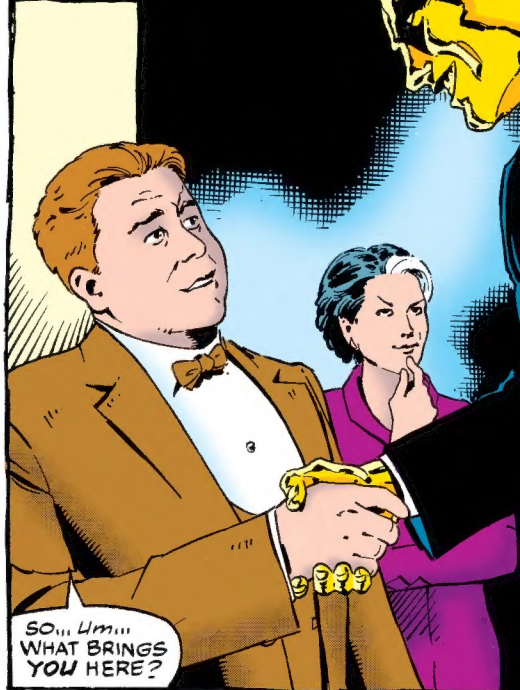


'FRAID NOT, PAL! WILL HER **STEP-BROTHER** DO?

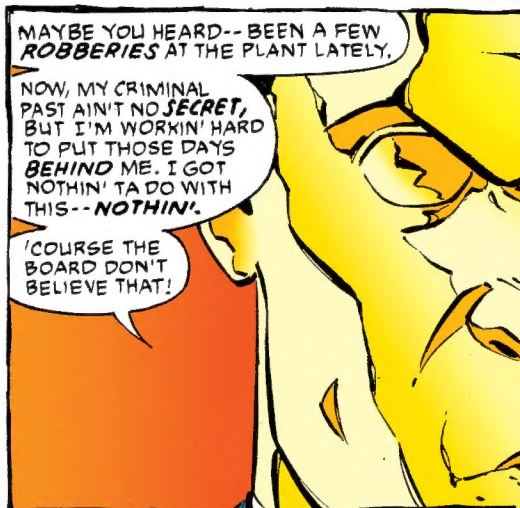
MARK RAXTON-- BUT MAYBE YA KNOW ME BETTER AS THE **MOLTEN MAN!**

I OVERSEE THE DAY-TO-DAY AT **OSBORN CHEMICALS** FOR SIS, FOGGY-- DON'T MIND IF I CALL YOU FOGGY, DO YOU?

NO! YOU, UM... CAN CALL ME ANYTHING YOU WANT!



SO... UM... WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE?



MAYBE YOU HEARD-- BEEN A FEW **ROBBERIES** AT THE PLANT LATELY.

NOW, MY CRIMINAL PAST AIN'T NO **SECRET**, BUT I'M WORKIN' HARD TO PUT THOSE DAYS **BEHIND** ME. I GOT NOTHIN' TA DO WITH THIS-- **NOTHIN'!**

'COURSE THE BOARD DON'T BELIEVE THAT!



THEY'RE TRYIN' TA FORCE ME **OUT**, FOGGY! WHERE'LL I GO **THEN**, huh? WHAT'LL I DO **THEN?**

I GOTTA PROVE I'M **INNOCENT**-- BUT IF I'M SPOTTED ANYWHERE NEAR THOSE CRIME SCENES...

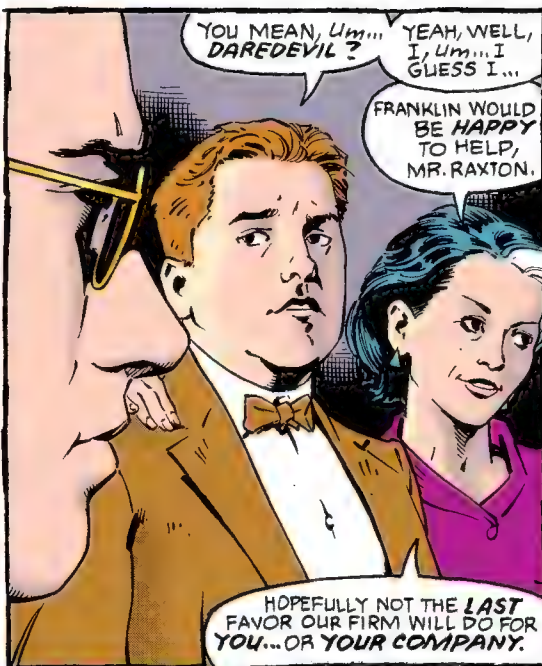


I'M JAMMED UP AN' WITH THE FFAN' **AVENGERS GONE**, YA KNOW? AN' DON'T EVEN GET ME **STARTED** ON **SPIDER-MAN!**

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TA DO! I'M FEELIN' **TRAPPED...**



... THEN SIS TELLS ME **YOU'RE** IN TIGHT WITH THE **HORNHEAD!**

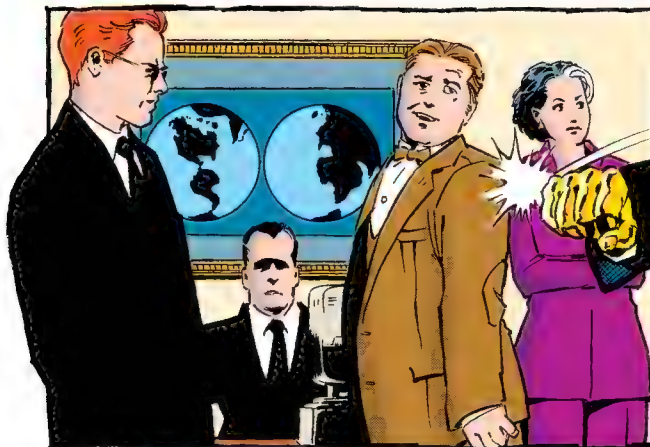


YOU MEAN, *Um...* **DAREDEVIL?**

YEAH, WELL, I, *Um...* I GUESS I...

FRANKLIN WOULD BE **HAPPY** TO HELP, MR. RAXTON.

HOPEFULLY NOT THE **LAST** FAVOR OUR FIRM WILL DO FOR **YOU... OR YOUR COMPANY.**



YA DON'T GOTTA WORRY 'BOUT **THAT**--NOT FROM WHAT **SIS** TELLS ME!

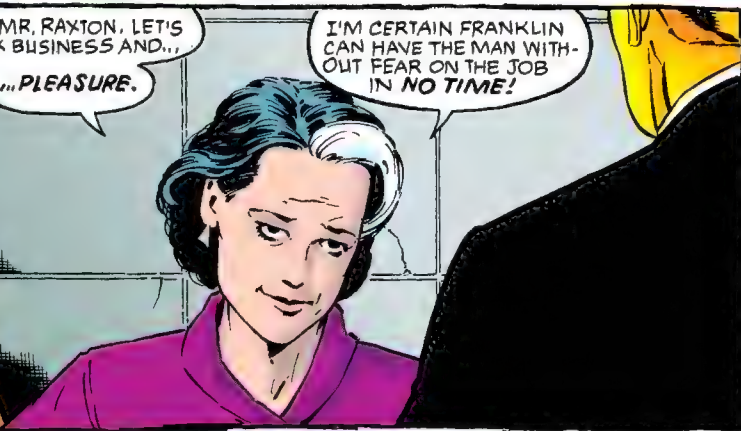
Eh, FOGSTER?

Um... WELL... I... *Um...* I GUESS YOU COULD SAY--

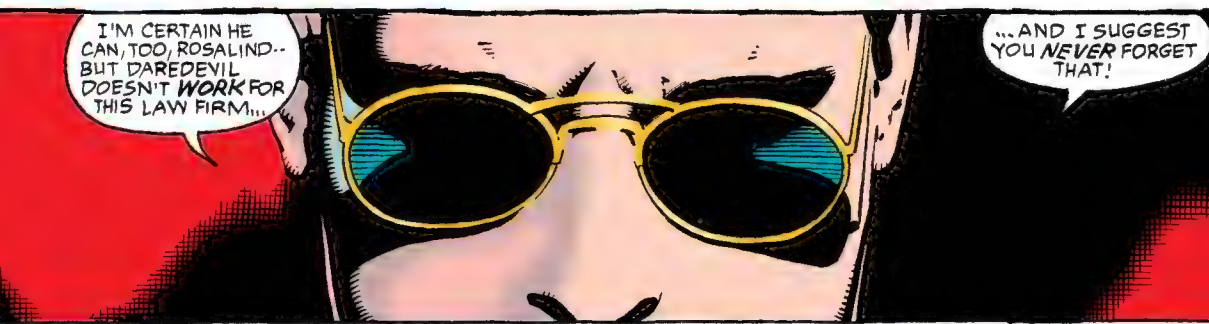


PLEASE, MR. RAXTON. LET'S NOT MIX BUSINESS AND...

...**PLEASURE.**



I'M CERTAIN FRANKLIN CAN HAVE THE MAN WITH-OUT FEAR ON THE JOB IN **NO TIME!**



I'M CERTAIN HE CAN, TOO, ROSALIND-- BUT **DAREDEVIL** DOESN'T **WORK** FOR THIS LAW FIRM...

...AND I SUGGEST YOU **NEVER** FORGET THAT!

FIFTEEN HOURS LATER, AND THE BAD TASTE IN MY MOUTH ISN'T JUST FROM THE OSBORN PLANT'S RANCID SMOKE...

THE MORNING KEEPS REPLAYING IN MY MIND LIKE A BROKEN RECORD--"RAZOR" SHARPE IN FINE FORM.

I COULD STOP IT EASILY ENOUGH, BUT AFTER ALL THE YEARS I KEPT FOGGY IN THE DARK ABOUT ME BEING DAREDEVIL...

...I DON'T WANT TO DO ANYTHING TO DIM HIS TIME IN THE SPOTLIGHT. I OWE HIM THAT MUCH.

WHICH IS WHY I PUSH ALL THOUGHTS ASIDE WHEN THE MIDNIGHT WHISTLE BLOWS.

RAXTON SAYS THE ROBBERIES OCCUR BETWEEN SHIFTS WHILE THE WAREHOUSES ARE NEARLY EMPTY.

IT'S OVER BEFORE SECURITY CAN RESPOND.

WITHOUT A DOUBT, SHE'S ONE OF THE MOST MANIPULATIVE AND HEARTLESS PEOPLE I'VE EVER MET.

NO WONDER KINGPIN NEVER EXPANDED HIS CRIMINAL ORGANIZATION INTO HER HOMETOWN OF BOSTON.

THE WHOLE "DAREDEVIL'S PAL, FOGGY NELSON" THING--IT'S CLEAR RAZOR ISN'T INTERESTED IN HELPING FOGGY...

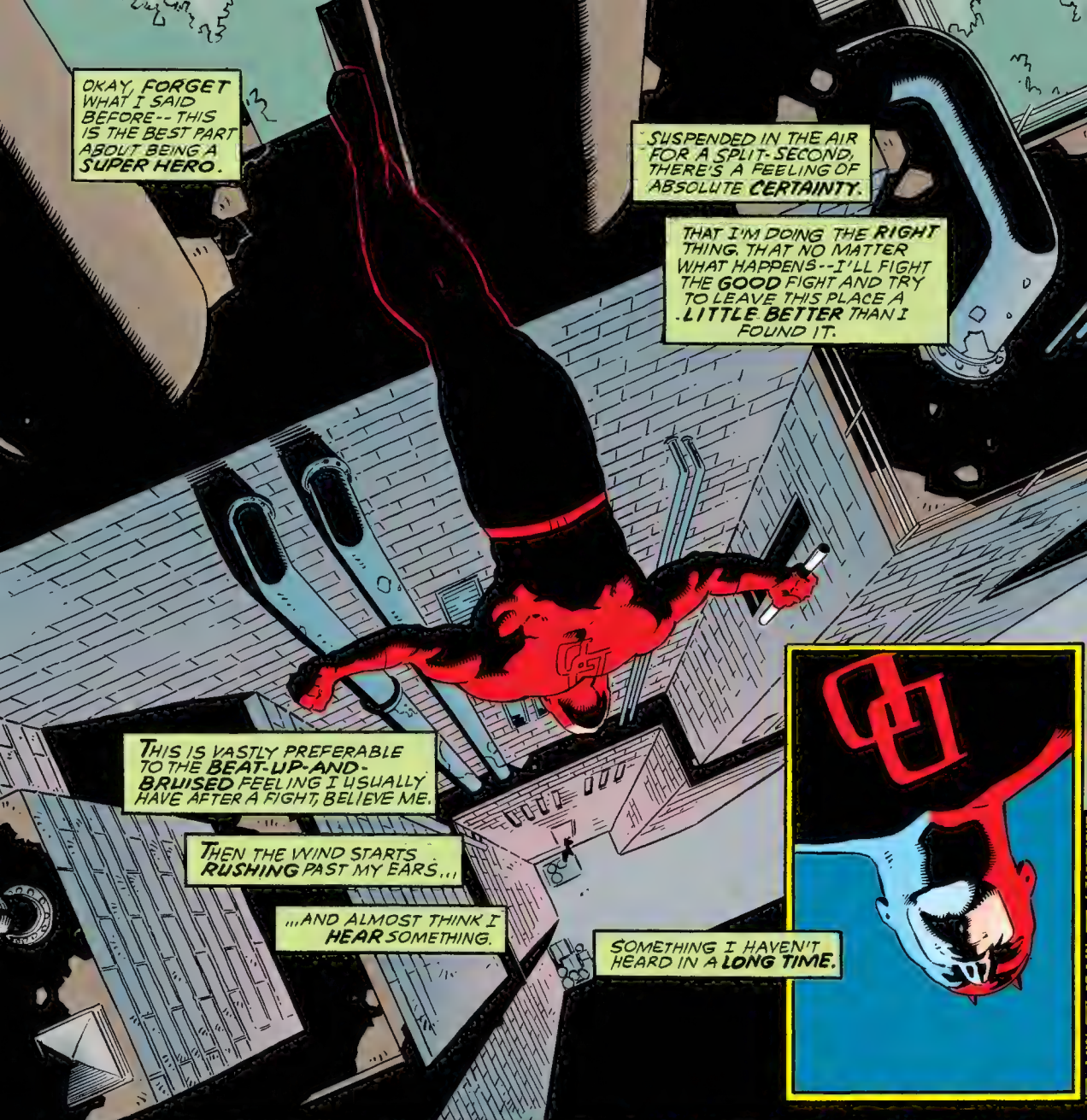
OF COURSE, SOMETHING TELLS ME THEY DON'T RESPOND TOO QUICKLY SINCE THE PERP CAN...

...TEAR THROUGH SOLID STEEL DOORS.

SPRANGK

THAT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE AVON CALLING.

FWIKK



OKAY FORGET
WHAT I SAID
BEFORE-- THIS
IS THE BEST PART
ABOUT BEING A
SUPER HERO.

SUSPENDED IN THE AIR
FOR A SPLIT-SECOND,
THERE'S A FEELING OF
ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY.


THAT I'M DOING THE RIGHT
THING. THAT NO MATTER
WHAT HAPPENS--I'LL FIGHT
THE GOOD FIGHT AND TRY
TO LEAVE THIS PLACE A
LITTLE BETTER THAN I
FOUND IT.

THIS IS VASTLY PREFERABLE
TO THE BEAT-UP-AND-
BRUISED FEELING I USUALLY
HAVE AFTER A FIGHT, BELIEVE ME.

THEN THE WIND STARTS
RUSHING PAST MY EARS...

...AND ALMOST THINK I
HEAR SOMETHING.

SOMETHING I HAVEN'T
HEARD IN A LONG TIME.



FEH! THESE COMMON
THEFTS ARE **BENEATH**.
ME! IF ONLY I DID NOT
NEED THE MONEY TO
REBUILD MY **LABORA-
TORY!**

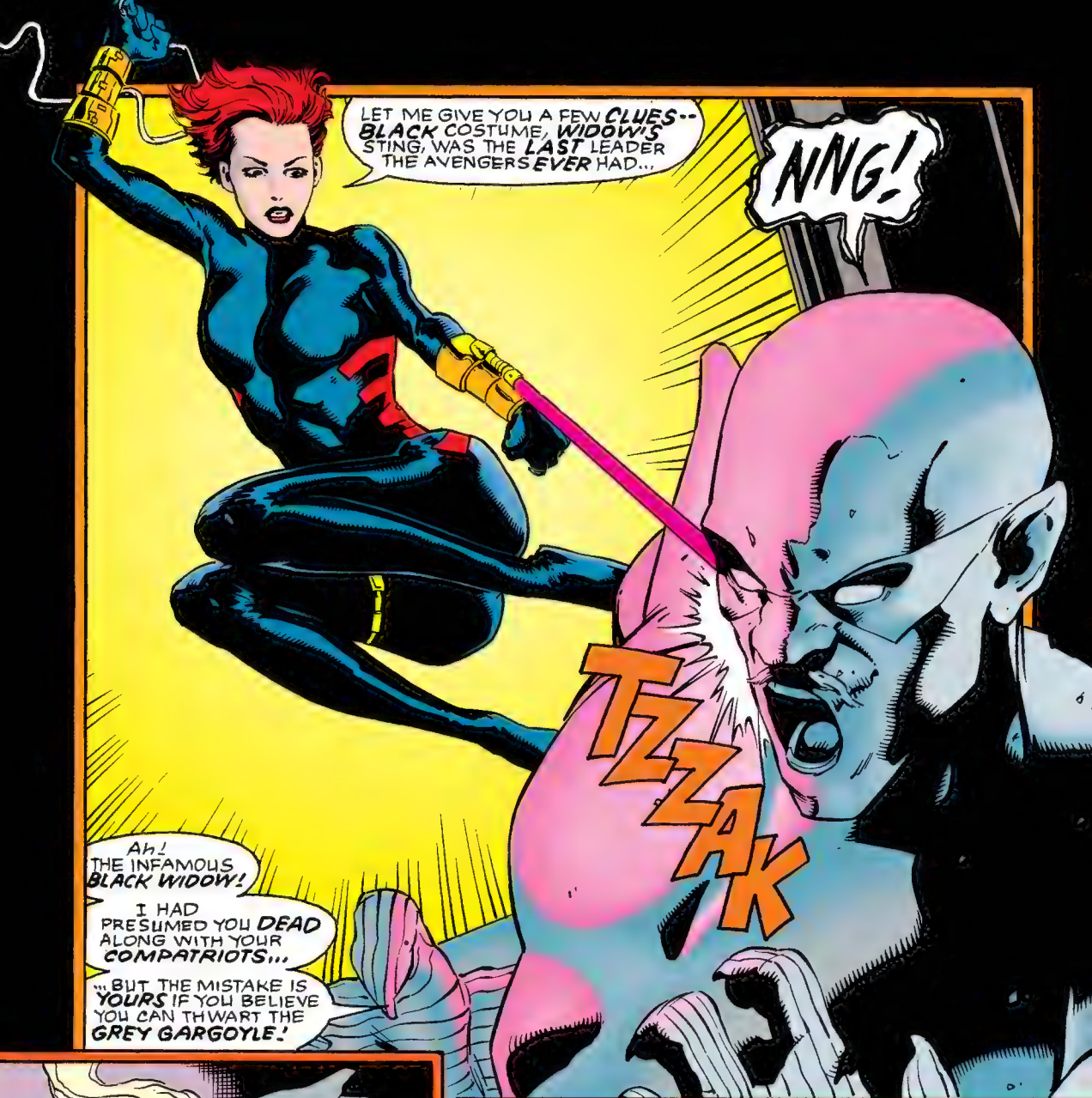
BUT AFTER TONIGHT, I WILL
HAVE PROCURED **ALL** THE
CHEMICALS MY EMPLOYER
REQUIRES...

...AND IF HE DOES
NOT PAY, IT IS **HE**
WHO WILL KNOW
THE **TRUE** MEANING
OF FEAR!

HE WON'T
BE THE **ONLY**
ONE!

WHO--?





LET ME GIVE YOU A FEW **CLUES**--
BLACK COSTUME, **WIDOW'S**
STING, WAS THE **LAST** LEADER
THE **AVENGERS** **EVER** HAD...

TING!

TZZAK

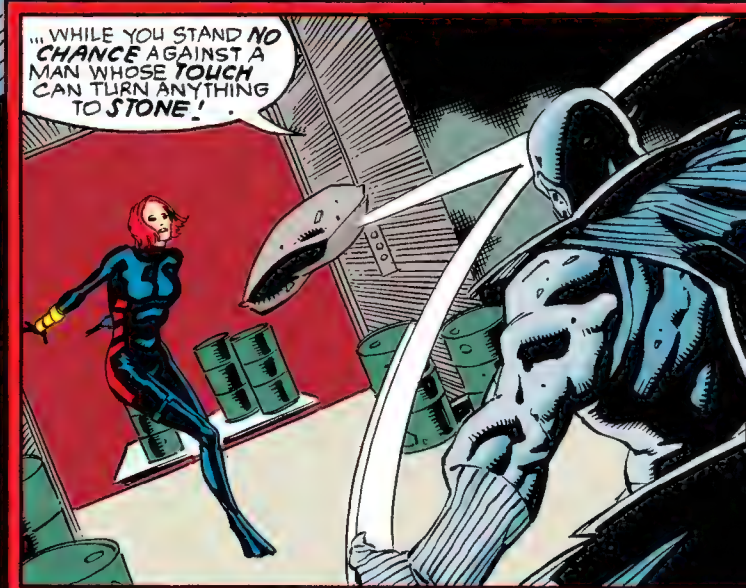
Ah!
THE INFAMOUS
BLACK WIDOW!

I HAD
PRESUMED YOU **DEAD**
ALONG WITH YOUR
COMPATRIOTS...

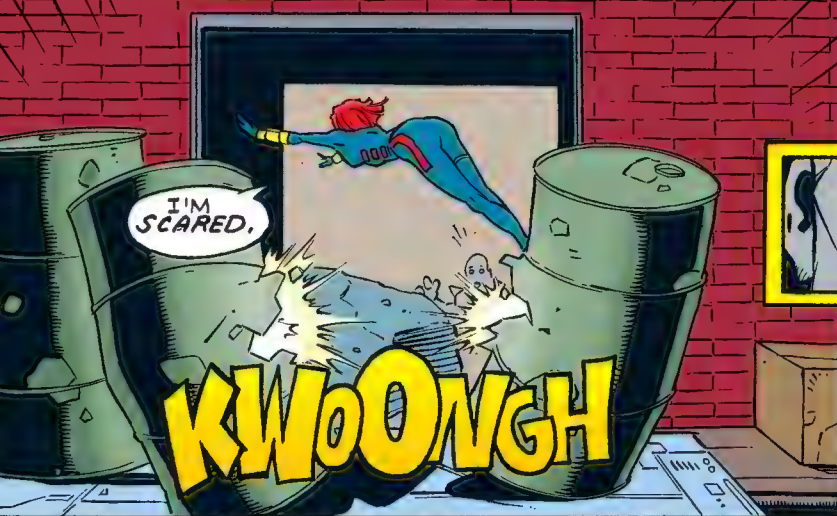
...BUT THE MISTAKE IS
YOURS IF YOU BELIEVE
YOU CAN THWART THE
GREY GARGOYLE!



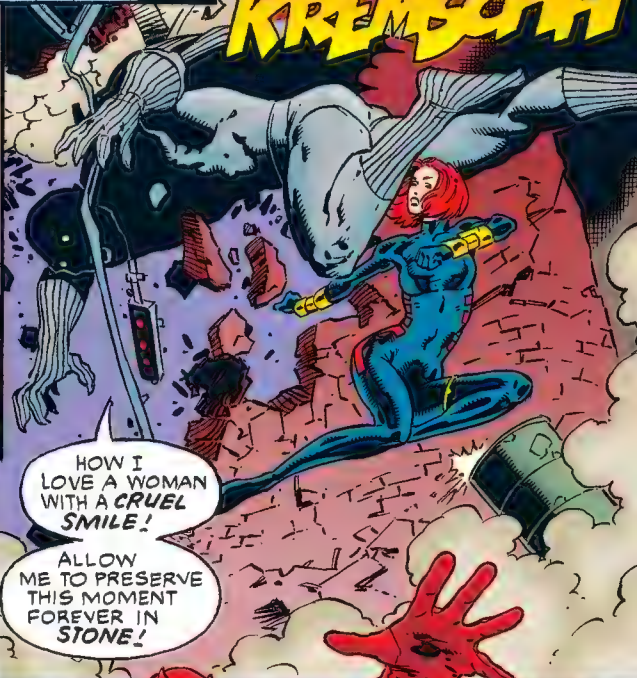
YOUR
PITIFUL STINGS ARE
MERE **ANNOYANCES**
TO ME...



...WHILE YOU STAND **NO**
CHANCE AGAINST A
MAN WHOSE **TOUCH**
CAN TURN ANYTHING
TO **STONE!**



YOU
TRICKED ME
INTO DESTROYING
THEM!





JUST LIKE WHEN WE WERE PARTNERS, *huh*, NATASHA?

MATT?

THOUGHT I RECOGNIZED YOUR HEARTBEAT EARLIER-- AND, OF COURSE, THE PERFUME IS... WELL, IT BRINGS BACK **MEMORIES**.

CAME BY YOUR PLACE A FEW DAYS AGO. YOU WEREN'T IN. THAT WAS RIGHT AFTER...



GUNH!

STAY OUT OF THIS! STAY OUT OF MY LIFE!

THE GARGOYLE'S MINE AND MINE ALONE!

WUNK



NICE...

KEKA

NICE SEEING YOU, TOO.

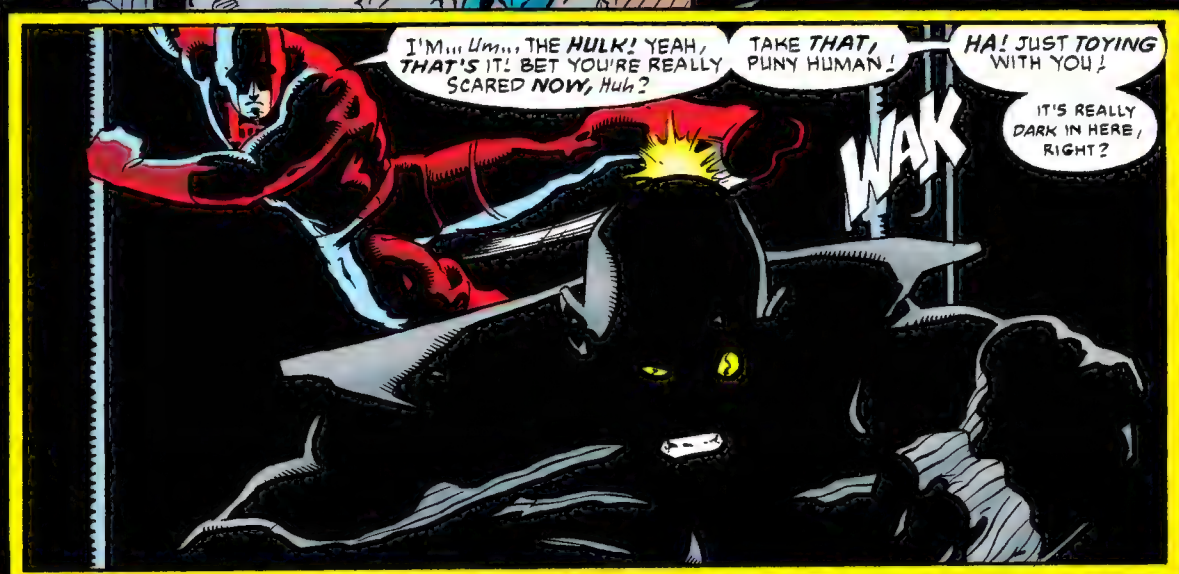


INTERFERING FOOLS!

EVERYTHING WAS PROCEEDING SMOOTHLY.

KWOOM







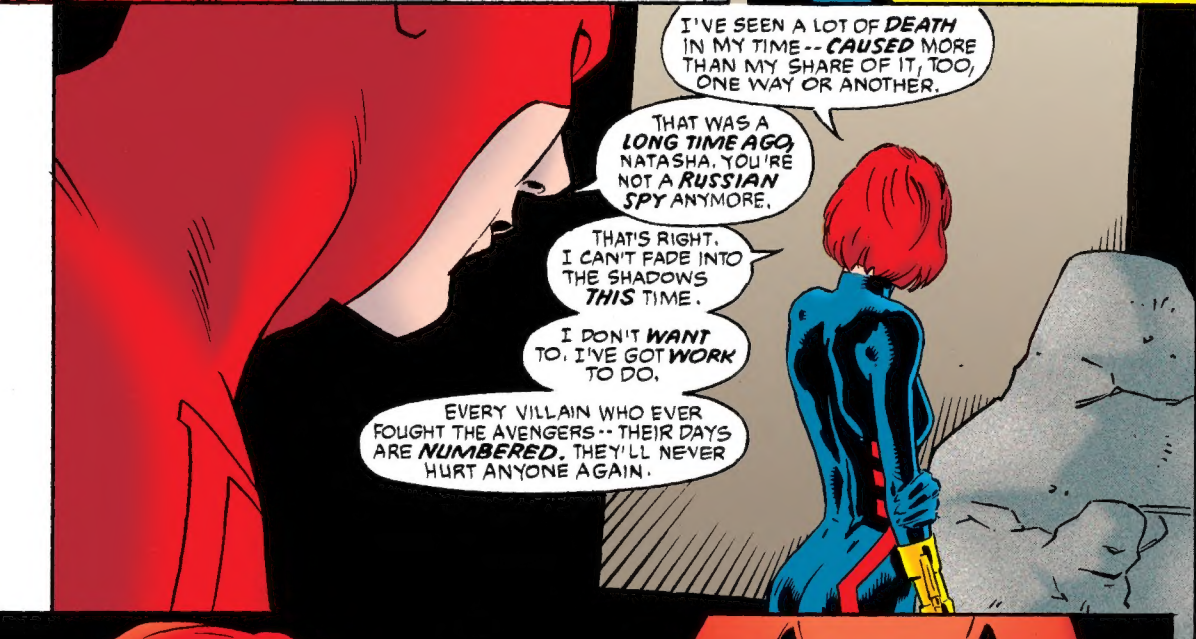


WHY BOTHER?

AND
MAYBE IT'D BE NICE
IF HE DIDN'T KEEP
COMING BACK!

MAYBE THE
AVENGERS WOULD
STILL BE HERE IF
PROBLEMS LIKE
THE GARGOYLE
WEREN'T!

I'M
NOT SAYING TEACH
HIM THE **MACARENA**,
NATASHA-- I'M SAYING
IT MIGHT BE NICE IF
HE COULD **BREATHE!**



I'VE SEEN A LOT OF **DEATH**
IN MY TIME -- **CAUSED** MORE
THAN MY SHARE OF IT, TOO,
ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.

THAT WAS A
LONG TIME AGO,
NATASHA. YOU'RE
NOT A **RUSSIAN**
SPY ANYMORE.

THAT'S RIGHT.
I CAN'T FADE INTO
THE SHADOWS
THIS TIME.

I DON'T **WANT**
TO. I'VE GOT **WORK**
TO DO.

EVERY VILLAIN WHO EVER
FOUGHT THE **AVENGERS**-- THEIR DAYS
ARE **NUMBERED**. THEY'LL NEVER
HURT ANYONE AGAIN.

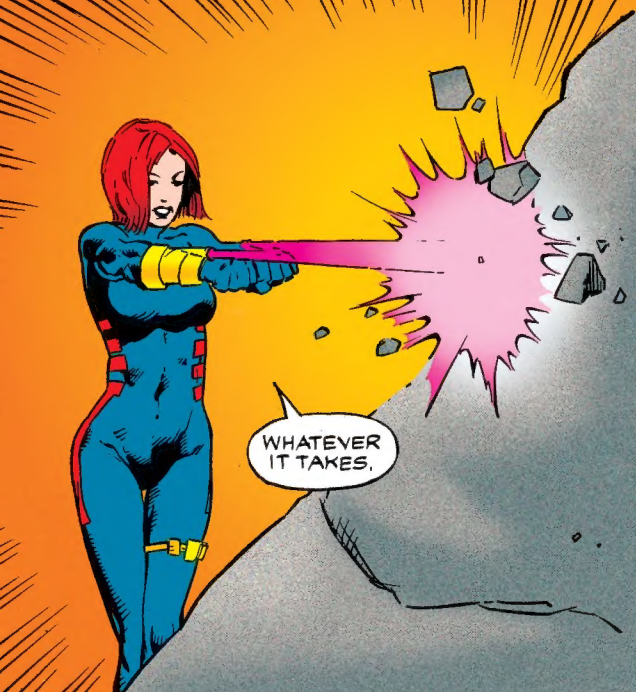


NOT
WHILE I
LIVE!



GOOD THING
I **KNOW** YOU,
NATASHA-- OR
I'D ALMOST
THINK THAT
SOUNDED LIKE
MURDER...

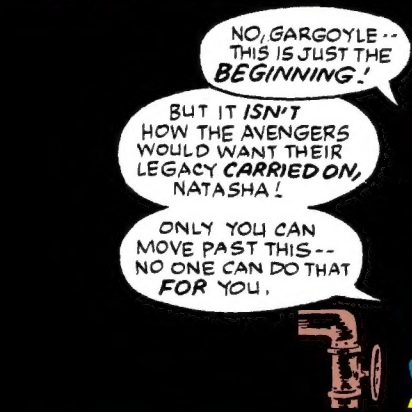
...OR
SUICIDE!



WHATEVER
IT TAKES.



FOOLISH
WOMAN!
YOU'VE MADE
A FATAL
MISTAKE IF YOU
THINK THIS IS
OVER!



NO, GARGOYLE --
THIS IS JUST THE
BEGINNING!

BUT IT *ISN'T*
HOW THE AVENGERS
WOULD WANT THEIR
LEGACY *CARRIED ON*,
NATASHA!

ONLY YOU CAN
MOVE PAST THIS --
NO ONE CAN DO THAT
FOR YOU.



I'M THE SURVIVING
WIDOW, DAREDEVIL -- I
THINK IT'S UP TO ME TO
DECIDE HOW TO
HONOR THEIR
MEMORY.

DON'T TRY TO STOP
ME AND DON'T TRY
TO HELP ME BECAUSE
YOU'RE RIGHT ABOUT
ONE THING...

...THIS IS
SOMETHING I
HAVE TO DO
ALONE!

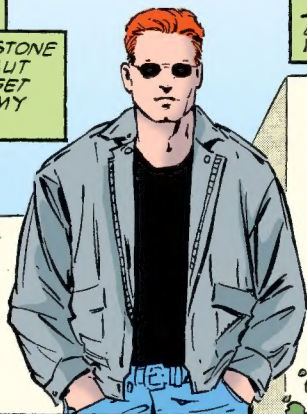
THE COPS ARRIVE WITHIN THE HOUR AND TAKE THE GARGOYLE INTO CUSTODY.

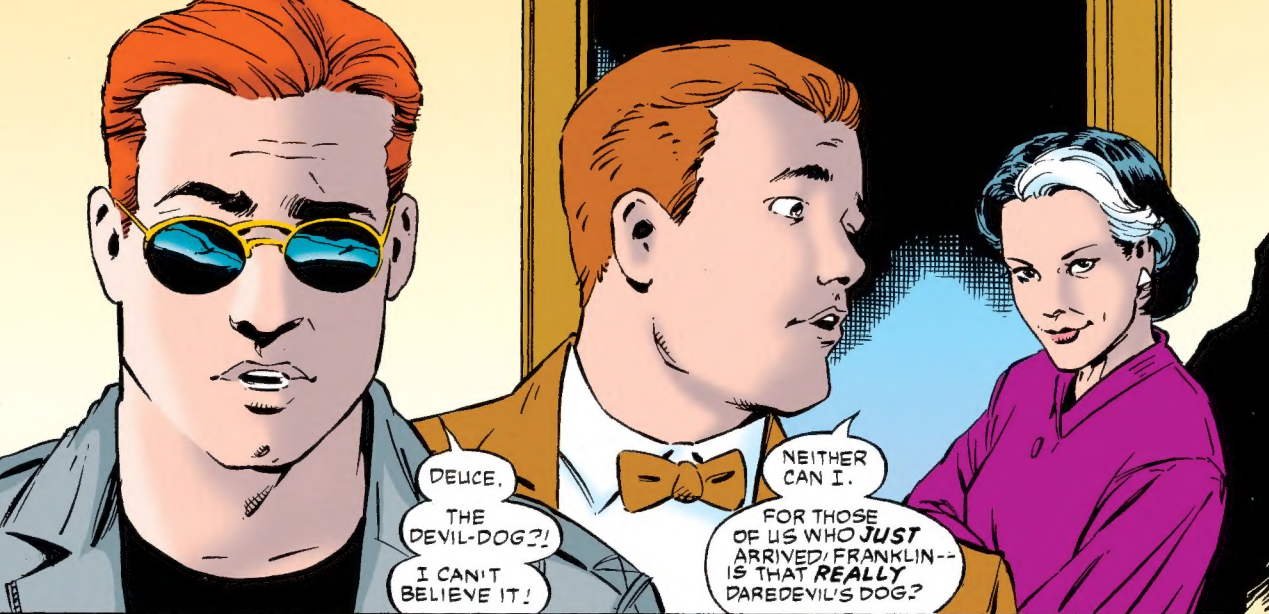
THEY CHIP THE STONE OFF MY FOOT, BUT THAT DOESN'T GET NATASHA OFF MY MIND.

I THINK ABOUT GOING AFTER HER, BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WHEN I FIND HER.

I END UP AT THE OFFICE WITH SOME VAGUE IDEA OF DOING WORK OR LISTENING TO KAREN'S SHOW.

TRUTH IS, MY MIND'S A MILLION MILES AWAY...



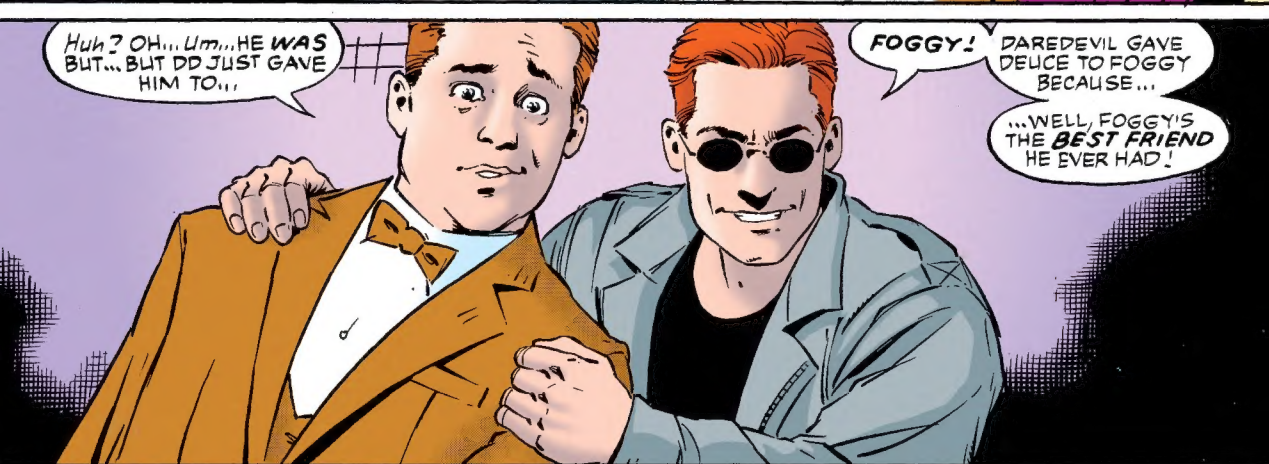


DEUCE.
THE
DEVIL-DOG?!

I CAN'T
BELIEVE IT!

NEITHER
CAN I.

FOR THOSE
OF US WHO **JUST**
ARRIVED, FRANKLIN--
IS THAT **REALLY**
DAREDEVIL'S DOG?



Huh? OH... Um... HE WAS
BUT... BUT DD JUST GAVE
HIM TO...

FOGGY! DAREDEVIL GAVE
DEUCE TO FOGGY
BECAUSE...

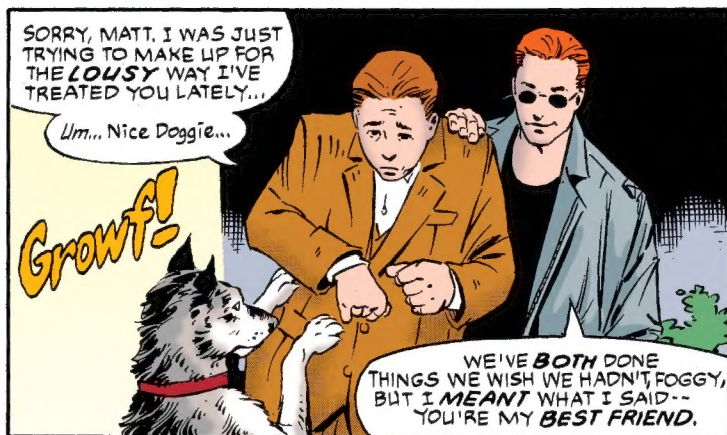
...WELL, FOGGY'S
THE **BEST FRIEND**
HE EVER HAD!



I SEE, WELL,
WE WANT TO STAY ON
DAREDEVIL'S **GOOD** SIDE, SO I
SUPPOSE WE'LL HAVE TO KEEP
THE MONGREL **AROUND**.

JUST
REMEMBER-- **YOU** HAVE TO
TAKE CARE OF IT, FRANKLIN.
IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY,
NOT MINE.

I'LL SEE YOU
BOTH IN THE **MORNING**...

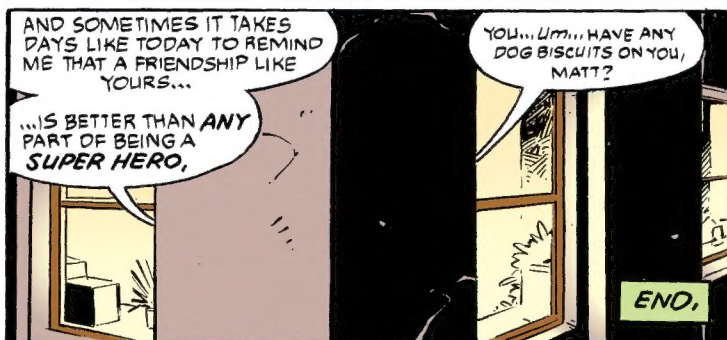


SORRY, MATT. I WAS JUST
TRYING TO MAKE UP FOR
THE **LOUSY** WAY I'VE
TREATED YOU LATELY...

Um... Nice Doggie...

Growf!

WE'VE **BOTH** DONE
THINGS WE WISH WE HADN'T, FOGGY,
BUT I **MEANT** WHAT I SAID--
YOU'RE MY **BEST FRIEND**.



AND SOMETIMES IT TAKES
DAYS LIKE TODAY TO REMIND
ME THAT A FRIENDSHIP LIKE
YOURS...

...IS BETTER THAN **ANY**
PART OF BEING A
SUPER HERO,

YOU... Um... HAVE ANY
DOG BISCUITS ON YOU,
MATT?

END.